

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method for determining competitive partners from among a plurality of participants in a selected one of a plurality of rounds in a competitive event wherein selected ones of said participants have an associated ranking, said method comprising the steps of:

selecting a first participant from the plurality of participants; the first participant having a ranking that is higher than the respective rankings of all the remaining participants of the plurality of participants; in accordance with said associated ranking, one of said participants;

allowing said first selected participant to select a second another participant from said remaining plurality of participants; and

removing said first selected participant and said second selected other participant from further consideration for said selected round;

repeating said selecting, allowing and removing steps to obtain a plurality of competitive partners;

recording a winning and a losing participant of an engagement for each of said competitive partners in said selected round; and

removing said losing participant of each of said competitive partners from further participation in said competitive event.

2. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

organizing said participants into a first group and a second group wherein each of said participants in said first group is associated with said ranking.

3. (Original) The method as recited in claim 2, further comprising:

associating a ranking with each of said participants in said second group.

4. (Original) The method as recited in claim 3, wherein said associated ranking is determined in accordance with completion of known events.

5. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 4, wherein said known events are selected from the group consisting of: past competitive events among selected ones of said participants, accumulated results of past competitive events among selected ones of said participants, random selection, and a lottery.

6. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein said competitive events are selected from the group consisting of: sporting events, television game shows, reality shows, and intellectual games.

7. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of: providing a computer processor including code which, when executed, performs at least one of said selecting, allowing, removing, repeating, recording, and removing said losing participant steps.

~~recording a winning and a losing participant of an engagement from each of said selected participants and said selected other participants in said selected round; and~~

~~removing said losing participant from further participation in said competitive event.~~

8. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1 ~~claim 7~~, further comprising the step of: allowing each said winning participant of said selected round to retain said associated ranking.

9. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1 ~~claim 7~~, further comprising the step of: allowing each said winning participant of said competitive round to retain an associated ranking of said ~~loser~~ losing participant when said losing participant's associated ranking is higher.

10. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1 ~~claim 7~~, further comprising the step of:

assigning a ranking to each winning participant of said round based on performance in said round.

11. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein said round is selected from the group consisting of sporting events, game shows, reality shows, and intellectual games.

12. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein said participants are selected from the group consisting of: individuals, and teams of individuals.

13. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein ~~each of said steps of selecting, allowing, removing, repeating, recording and removing said losing participant are repeated~~ is executed until a single participant is remaining.
14. (Withdrawn): A method for operating a competitive event having a plurality of rounds among a plurality of competitors comprising the steps of:
- a. determining a ranking for at least half of said plurality of competitors, wherein said ranking is associated with an order of selection;
 - b. selecting one of said ranked competitors in the order of said ranking;
 - c. allowing said selected ranked competitor to select one of said remaining competitors as a competitive partner;
 - d. continuously selecting said competitors until each of said competitors is associated with a competitive partner;
 - e. recording a winning and a losing competitor in an engagement of competitive partners in said round of competitive event;
 - f. removing said losing competitor from further participation; and
 - g. associating a new ranking with each remaining competitor.
15. (Withdrawn): The method as recited in claim 14, wherein said competitive event is selected from the group comprising: sporting events, game shows, reality shows, intellectual games.
16. (Withdrawn): The method as recited in claim 15, wherein said sporting events are selected from the group consisting of: baseball, football, soccer, basketball, racing, golf, boxing, tennis.
17. (Withdrawn): The method as recited in claim 14, wherein said ranking is determined from the group consisting of: prior performance, accumulated record in prior performance, a lottery, random selection.
18. (Withdrawn): The method as recited in claim 14, wherein said new ranking is selected from the group consisting of: maintaining a current associated ranking, obtaining a losing competitor's ranking.

19. (Withdrawn): The method as recited in claim 14, further comprising:
iteratively repeating steps a-g for each of said rounds.
20. (Withdrawn): The method as recited in claim 14, wherein said competitors are selected from the group consisting of: individuals, teams, individuals within a team.
- 21-33. (Canceled)
34. (Withdrawn): The system as recited in claim 20, wherein said means is a processor in communication with a memory.
- 35-37. (Canceled)
38. (Currently Amended) A method for determining competitive partners from among a plurality of participants in a selected one of a plurality of rounds in a competitive event wherein at least one of said participants has an associated ranking, said method comprising the steps of:
organizing at least one of said participants into a first group and remaining ones of said participants into a second group;
selecting, within said second group in accordance with said associated ranking, one of said participants, said one of said participants having a ranking that is higher than the rankings of all the remaining participants in said second group;
allowing said selected participant to select another participant from said plurality of participants; and
removing said selected participant and selected another participant from further consideration for said selected round;
repeating said selecting, allowing and removing steps to obtain a plurality of competitive partners;
recording a winning and a losing participant of an engagement for each of said competitive partners in said selected round; and
removing said losing participant of each of said competitive partners from further participation in said competitive event.

39. (Original) The method as recited in claim 38, wherein each of said at least one of said participants in said first group has a higher associated ranking than each of said participants in said second group.

40. (Original) The method as recited in claim 38, wherein said associated ranking is determined in accordance with completion of known events.

41. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 40, wherein said known events are selected from the group consisting of: past competitive events among selected ones of said participants, accumulated results of past competitive events among selected ones of said participants, random selection, and a lottery.

42. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 38, wherein said competitive events are selected from the group consisting of: sporting events, television game shows, reality shows, and intellectual games.

43. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 38, further comprising the steps of: providing a computer processor including code which, when executed, performs at least one of said selecting, allowing, removing, repeating, recording, and removing said losing participant steps.

~~recording a winning and a losing participant of an engagement from each of said selected participants and said selected other participants in said selected round; and
removing said losing participant of said round from further participation in said competitive event.~~

44. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 38 ~~claim 43~~, further comprising the step of:

~~allowing said each winning winner~~ participant of said selected round to retain said associated ranking.

45. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 38 ~~claim 43~~, further comprising the step of: allowing each ~~said~~ winning participant of said competitive round to obtain an associated ranking of said ~~loser~~ losing participant's when said ~~loser's~~ losing participant's associated ranking is higher.

46. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 38 ~~claim 43~~, further comprising the step of:

assigning an associated ranking to each winning participant of said round based on a performance in said round.

47. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 38, wherein said round is selected from the group consisting of sporting events, game shows, reality shows, and intellectual games.

48. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 38, wherein said participants are selected from the group consisting of: individuals, and teams of individuals.

49. (Original) The method as recited in claim 38, wherein said associated ranking of participants in said second group is determined randomly.

50. (New) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising allowing said winning participant of each of said competitive partners to further participate in said competitive event to determine a champion of said competitive event.

51. (New) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of recording a winning and a losing participant comprises recording such information on a computer readable medium.

52. (New) The method as recited in claim 38, further comprising allowing said winning participant of each of said competitive partners to further participate in said competitive event to determine a champion of said competitive event.

53. (New) The method as recited in claim 38, wherein the step of recording a winning and a losing participant comprises recording such information on a computer readable medium.